

Education and Progress.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE FRANKLIN AND WASHINGTON

LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE,

AT EASTON, PA.

At the Annual Commencement,

SEPTEMBER 14, 1847.

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EASTON, PA.

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LAFAYETTE COLLEGE, *Sept. 15th, 1847.*

Rev. J. M. Krebs, D.D.,—

DEAR SIR,—In behalf of the Societies which we respectively represent, we tender you our sincere thanks for your very able and highly interesting Address, delivered last evening, and would respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

HENRY E. SPAYD,
R. B. FORESMAN,
H. M. HOYT,

} *Committee of W. L. Society.*

ROBERT M. WALLACE,
WM. C. SOMERVILLE,
A. WHITON,

} *Committee of F. L. Society.*

EASTON, *Sept. 15th, 1847.*

GENTLEMEN,—The Address, delivered last evening, before your Societies, having been prepared at their request, is herewith transmitted to you, to be disposed of according to your communication of this morning.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN M. KREBS.

Messrs. HENRY E. SPAYD, &c., Committee.

EDUCATION AND PROGRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE FRANKLIN AND WASHINGTON LITERARY SOCIETIES
OF LAFAYETTE COLLEGE.

These titles are happily associated.

When, perhaps too recently for the just demands of this occasion, I received your request to address you, I nevertheless felt myself persuaded, by the combination of these revered names with each other, and with these academic studies and recreations with which they are so significantly blended. I found, in the association, something suggestive, both as to the themes appropriate to this literary festival, and as to the topics and methods suited to their illustration.

Washington! Franklin! Lafayette! names which the world delights to honor!—names interwoven with the greatest era of modern history; with events that belong to all time, and pregnant with the destinies of the human race!—names that are representative of the great principles of social privilege and duty, of salutary progress, and true prosperity!—names canonized in the calendars of patriotism and philanthropy, and emblazoned in the archives of public and private virtue!—names not all unknown to philosophy; famed for wisdom and sagaciousness; patronal of science, industry and art! With these names you would adorn the grove of Academus and fair Lyceum's walk, as indices of the principles that should be cherished and the characters that should be formed, by the sons and lovers of learning, and as tokens of a covenant with

your country and your kind, that, prominent amid the aims of life, you will

“——— the people's rights maintain,
Unaw'd by influence and unbrib'd by gain;”

that from you, also,

“Shall patriot truth her noblest precepts draw,
Pledged to religion, liberty and law.”

We hail the omen,—we accept the suggestion which it yields. And we would follow this guidance, in making some remarks ON THE RELATION OF EDUCATED AMERICANS TO THEIR COUNTRYMEN AND TO MANKIND,—considered with reference to the *progressive character of the present age*, the *influence of educated men*, and the *principles* by which they should be guided, in the exertion of that influence. And it is my trust, gentlemen, that in approaching these high themes, I shall neither be expected nor tempted to speak of them, in any other spirit than becomes a Christian patriot and a Christian minister.

It is manifest to every observing mind that the age in which we live is characterised by a restless avidity of change. It is not necessary to assert that, in this particular, our age is altogether different from all that have preceded it. Nor, indeed, is such the fact. For remarkable as are the uneasiness of men, and the heaving and swelling of the great bosom of society, such also has been the characteristic of former times; individuals and communities alike partaking, more or less, of the desire to alter existing arrangements, in the hope—sometimes well-founded, but alas! as often vain—of producing a state of things which shall at least be novel, and perhaps advantageous. It is indeed a result of that great law of progress which is impressed upon society, and under the influence of which, it must be admitted that the condition of man has been meliorated, and the happiness of nations greatly promoted. And, as far as that law is in operation,—even where it is perverted and misapplied, so as to threaten a mere *exchange* of evils, or even the substitution of a worse condition than that which seems op-

pressive, and therefore is attempted to be thrown off—there is a propriety in rebuking our fear, and in encouraging our hope, and in directing to ourselves the injunction of him, who demonstrated that there is nothing new under the sun, “Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.”

But in whatsoever manner former times present examples of evils, and are marked with the ruthless spirit of change—where old foundations were broken up, and the hearts of the sober and the pious too, oft failed for fear of a process that seemed to lead to universal degeneracy, while, after all, the result was nothing but the reproduction of the image of some *more* ancient day,—still it can never be the less an occasion of deep solicitude to us, to mark the phases which the spirit of change assumes among ourselves; nor the less a duty to consider our own responsibilities in the view of it, and to be upon our guard, so as to contribute, as far as in us lies, to the shape, direction and influences which may be impressed upon it for good, and to ward off the evils which we may justly apprehend, should its energies be mis-directed and uncontrolled. While the actual progress which society has made, and the real melioration of man’s lot in the earth, (notwithstanding every threatening danger of the past, and the liability to error in every thing which men manage,) and especially our dependence and grounds of confidence in Him, who stilleth all the tumults of the people, give us encouragement to hope and trust that “that Providence which is abroad upon the universe and presides in high authority over the destinies of all worlds,” will, at all times, establish a proper limit to the waves even of the angry sea, and will still continue for our safety, to say, “Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.”

Wherever we turn our eyes, we find the spirit of change at work, and man is everywhere moved by the impulses of its resistless energy. Vicissitude marks peculiarly the history of the world, in that period which measures our own history as an independent nation. The old and settled order of things,—the deep foundations which successive centuries laid, and the

progress of other centuries seemed only to enlarge and strengthen, are undermined and breaking up. The advancement of science is changing the whole aspect of human society; new ideas are awakening in the bosom of them that have hitherto but vegetated in patient and incurious stolidity; the spirit of liberty is rousing anew from her lethargy; and the political movements of governments and of the people under them, are contributing their part toward an entire revolution of the state and aspect of the whole world.

The American revolution exhibited the spectacle of a young and enterprising nation, rising up, like a youthful giant to burst his bonds, and to throw off the chains of foreign oppression, and astonishing the nations of the old world by claiming, and taking, and maintaining, rank among them. It commenced its career, by establishing new institutions of government, wherein the necessity of thrones was denied, and no place was provided for hereditary kings,—but wherein it *was* assumed and settled, that the rights and happiness of the people are to be first considered, in the establishment of governments, the adoption of constitutions, the enactments of law, and the erection of judicial tribunals. And this great fact, that government is not a tool, put by divine right into the hands of despots, but a presiding agency for the Commonwealth, ordained by Heaven to be a “terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well,” was learned from that great charter of human liberty, the Book of God,—whose authority, and truth, and power, were so essentially conspicuous in the days that tried men’s souls, and guided them in laying the foundations of an empire of freemen. The working of the system thus set up, has demonstrated it to be, on the whole, good and safe for us. Under these institutions, efficient, honored and happy, our fathers and ourselves, have lived in all good prosperity; and “having obtained help from God, we continue even until now.”

But the influence of this spectacle went forth upon the world, “At the altar of American liberty, France lighted her torch of wild enthusiasm.” But, goaded with the accumulated oppressions of ancient despotism, the progress of her revolution be-

came a frenzy, signalised by excesses which must be deplored by every lover of humanity. In the attempt to plant the tree of liberty in that vicious soil, men resorted to the "tremendous tillage, which begun by clearing with the conflagration, and ploughing with the earthquake," and irrigating with human blood. Unhappily for France, she had "hardly broken the chains of slavery,—and thought to enjoy the benefits of liberty, without fulfilling its conditions. She had more enthusiasm than virtue, or perseverance. She lacked religious sentiments to temper her fervid opinions, and set bounds to her revolutionary acts." And yet the very violence of the effort had its place, in ultimately extending the principles of freedom; in laying their foundations in other lands; and in disseminating those principles whose operation has been to shake the nations of Europe to their centre, to unsettle the prerogatives of monarchs, and to teach kings the obligations of justice and patriotism. The day has gone by, when a crowned head could utter from the guarded recesses of Versailles, the arrogant boast, "I am the state." The gloomy repose of the Escorial has been disturbed with the shock which, not all in vain, has been emitted from the throes and convulsions of the Spanish people blindly struggling to be free. Prussia, in the person of her paternal sovereign, makes enlarged concessions to the enlightened demands of her children. And a new Pope, yielding to the spirit of the age, leads the way to the disparagement of his predecessor's infallibility, at least as a ruler, by simultaneously allowing the introduction, into the states of the Church, of rail-ways, so long dreaded as the channels of heresy and rebellion, and by issuing from the Vatican such an unwonted boon, as the program of a Constitution and a Parliament,—for a people hitherto bound hand and foot under the double chain of temporal and spiritual despotism, united in the person of the Vicar of Christ, and well nigh crushed under the weight of his triple crown. While, at the same time, borne on the winds of Heaven, the seeds of mighty change have been carried to the shores of the Bosphorus, and sown in remote Asia and Egypt, making their power felt, and producing fruit, in the adoption of new arts, and even of some harbingers of civil and

religious freedom, among the governments and among the people, who have long slumbered and slept, under the lethargic changelessness and customary bondage of oriental climes.

And this result is inevitable in an age distinguished for the trophies of art, and the discoveries of science ;—when the press, that mighty Orator, is speaking in every secluded valley and on the far mountain-top, and myriads upon myriads every day listen to its voice ;—when steam is constantly multiplying the comforts of life, introducing what were once the exclusive luxuries of princes, amidst the commonest necessities of the artisan's and laborer's daily existence, and throwing bridges across the vast ocean to bring the nations into closer brotherhood ;—when the traveller from western climes disdains the time-honored inconveniences of oriental locomotion, and casts up the dust upon the Red Sea Coast, with the wheels of his stage-coach, that plies whirling along before the startled vision of the Arab of the Desert ; or teaches the distant Hindoo to abandon his sluggish bark to the Ganges, and cast away his palanquin, that, over his arid plains, and penetrating to the very fastnesses of his Himmaleh, he may “ fly on iron-track with wings of fire ; ”—when man has even caught the subtle lightning, that in a moment flasheth from one part of the heaven to the other, confined its track to the tiny thread, with which he has girdled the earth, and, realising the fable of old romance, has made it the instant and faithful messenger of his thoughts, regardless alike of space and time ;—and when, availing itself of all these agencies, and turning them into means of better blessing, the glorious gospel, that has descended from the skies, goes forth in its beauty, its brightness, and its power, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,—announcing to the bruised and captive nations, the Anointed Deliverer, the healer of the broken-hearted, and imparting to the wretched bondman of sin, the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And this is the condition of things in all the world,—such is the spirit of the present age. It is a spirit, whose influence upon the whole is doubtless beneficial ; and the ultimate result of the whole is to overturn, and overturn, and overturn, until He

shall come, whose right it is to reign, and all the kingdoms of the world shall be brought under the safe and sanctified dominion of the Prince of Peace.

But while such is the fact, it is not every change that takes place, or is projected, that is to be acknowledged as true progress. Not every demand that may be made from every quarter, is to be venerated and obeyed, as essential to the advancement, safety, honor, stability and comfort of society. The wildest vagaries of political schemers, the dreams of visionary enthusiasts, the intriguing plots of demagogues, the clamours of infidel selfishness, may be urged upon us for our acceptance, under the pretence of improving our condition. These are foisted upon society, from time to time, as if from the inventive malignity of the great adversary, that he may bring into disrepute the sublime cause of man's advancement, or pervert and hinder his progress toward good, under the superintending protection and aid of the God of Heaven. But even these are often overruled for good; and when at the worst, the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing, and change is heralded by the spirit of this watchword of rebellion against the great governor of the world, "Let us break His bands asunder, and cast His cords from us,"—"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall hold them in derision:"—"Even the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath, shall he restrain."

It is ever to be borne in mind, both for our guidance and hope, when we would hail the progress of change, or when we dread its excesses, that our help and governor is on high. We are dependent every way on the will of God; and ours must be the great care, in contributing to the advancement of society, in consulting for the liberty and happiness of men, ourselves or others, and in labouring for the prosperity of our country, that no grand foundation principle which God has established, which has given strength, beauty and efficiency to the forms of law and polity, be overlooked, or set at naught, or violently overturned. In the view of this duty, and with

wise jealousy of rash and inconsiderate change, the Christian and patriot heart inquires, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do!" If the true and stable principles of government be disregarded;—if rulers become ambitious, unjust and oppressive;—if the laws are founded on selfishness, and are moulded by temporary expediency;—if the tribunals become forgetful that they are exponents of high precepts of truth and equity which belong to the harmonies of the universe and have their origin and seat in the bosom of God;—if the insane demands of a misguided populace prevail to the overthrow of the well-settled principles of law and order, which have been divinely sanctioned;—or if popular ebullition usurp the place of lawful authority, and fulmine its will as equal or paramount to the will of the state, or even of Him who "ordained the powers that be,"—then are there elements of anarchy, oppression, and despotism at work,—whether wielded by one tyrant or a million—which will undermine all the peace, the rights and the safety of all the friends of law and order; their efforts for the public good will be paralysed; and, sooner or later, not only will they be exterminated, but the land itself, the precious and the vile together, will be involved in universal wretchedness, and overthrown by the just vengeance of Him who sitteth in the heavens, and shall speak to them in His wrath, and vex them in His hot displeasure.

The happiness and prosperity of a community are intimately connected with its sense and manifestation of dependence on God. By him, kings reign, and princes decree justice. His favor is on the families that call upon his name; but the nation and kingdom that will not serve him, He has decreed shall utterly perish. As a people we have signally enjoyed His protection. When He cast out the heathen before the original planters, defended them against the savage, increased their strength, preserved them from being swallowed up by their enemies, and finally made them a nation,—in despite of the obstacles which beset their infancy and weakness, the tremendous difficulties under which their independence was vindicated, and the threatening

dangers of anarchy and dissolution which preceded the establishment of their constitution and government,—there is evidently to be seen the hand of God.

And this hand was seen; the dependence of the people on Him was recognized and acknowledged. For, as in all those early attempts to colonize the land which were begun for mere purposes of commerce and gain, without reference to religious considerations, disaster, disappointment, death and extermination, were remarkably the result, so the successful enterprises were those precisely which begun and were continued in open reliance on the Almighty arm, and under the avowed influence of the principles of the Bible, and for the sake of conscience and the truth.

The men who engaged in these enterprises were urged by the spirit of religious liberty; they came for the purpose of seeking an asylum for the pure worship of God, when this freedom was denied them in their native land. And although they smarted under the oppressions of ecclesiastical tyranny and arbitrary bigotry, they could well separate these *abuses*, from the obligation and the privilege of acknowledging and serving the God of Heaven, according to the principles which they had derived from his word. They felt that the foundations of their infant empire could be laid with safety and hope, only as they were cemented by the influence of religion, and sustained by the institutions of the Bible. We may see this fact, in all their religious institutions, in their sanctuaries, ministers and Bibles, their prayers, and public fasts and thanksgivings as commonwealths, their family government, their schools and rising colleges, their offices, tribunals and laws, and in all their constitutions, and all their public acts. And it is to this fact we are indebted for those strong Christian and protestant peculiarities which have been impressed upon the public conscience, and find a place in all the laws and constitutions of our land. in perfect consistency with the widest latitude of religious freedom. If in this last respect they were not at once inspired with the full conception of the wider ideas that have since prevailed, let it still be remembered that these ideas were more

than shadowed forth in them, and had then their first and largest development in all the world, and that moreover, liberty is not licentiousness, and every community possesses the inherent right of providing for its own internal peace and order. The full toleration of all religious sentiments has been of slow growth in our world; and its comprehensive meaning and practical recognition have not, perhaps, been yet attained, even by those who most love to asperse the alleged shortcomings of our founders. I remember well, that until a very few years ago, Jews were ineligible to public office in my honored and beloved native State of Maryland. I well remember the fierceness of the contest which preceded their enfranchisement. Yet that illiberal disfranchisement was a part of the original charter of the State, and, for a long time, was not deemed out of place. And although it has been boasted by and on behalf of the Catholic proprietary and his followers that they were signally the leaders, in the extension of toleration, even of those by whom they were themselves proscribed, yet, let this be observed, that, as far as the toleration of Protestants was concerned, it could not have been prevented under a charter granted by the king of Protestant England.

But, to return from this brief digression. While a sense of obligation to God, is still extensively a feature of the public mind, it does not exist without considerable drawback and defacement. The very freedom of our religious institutions, the appropriate separation of Church and State, the constitutional exemption of the government from all interference with our ecclesiastical organizations, and the very jealousy with which these principles are insisted upon by all classes and sects of our people, produce a tendency to forget our dependence on God *as a people*, and our obligation to his laws, to abstract their duties and destinies as such, from every thing which is not merely temporal, expedient and popular, in contradistinction from those things which are spiritual in their nature, and belong to the thought and essence of our subordination to God. In the practical working of our system, the opinion is sometimes avowed, and oftener implied, that as a state, or nation, we have

nothing whatever to do with religion, in any shape or form, beyond the bare protection of all persons in the free exercise of that form of religion which they may prefer.

Now this is perfectly true in a certain sense. That is to say, —and it is our safety that it is so,—the State may not establish and endow any sectarian form of religion whatever, nor prohibit the free exercise of any, nor disfranchise any man on the account of his religious opinions. But because this is so, is the State at liberty to disregard the great principles and universal precepts of the Bible,—or is the nation exempted from all allegiance to God?

Men may assert that, as Commonwealths, they have nothing to do with religion; they may strive to separate government from its influence, and to set up human wisdom and human will, and their own notions of prosperity and duty, against the clear methods and laws of God, to regard all religions, and all irreligion with equal indifference, to discard the Bible from their legislation, and to train the rising youth apart from its instruction and commandment. But God permits not the severance. He will rebuke or punish it. You may cast him off: but he will not be thus cast off with impunity. Wo unto the nations, when God shall abandon them!

The constitutions under which we live, have well defined the boundaries which separate Church and State; but they have not severed religion and the State, while they have, with equal felicity, defined the exact relations of the one to the other, and not disjoining, but embracing them both, have established such a connection as, I pray, may forever continue. In the model and basis of the laws; in the forms of administering justice; in the use of the oath; in the recognition of the Lord's day—that fundamental and peculiar mark of the Christian religion; in the well-settled decisions of the judicial tribunals; in the adoption of the common law; and in the constitutions of the United States, and of this Commonwealth and of other States, Christianity, or the religion of the Bible, is prominently recognized as a component element of our

civil institutions, as part and parcel of the law of the land.

The State has gone to this length of so establishing and recognizing Christianity that, while it tolerates Jew, Turk, Catholic and Infidel, and disfranchises none of them, it never intended, by this free and universal toleration, to concede any great fundamental principle of the Divine law, or true social order, to the demands of either. And until the whole Constitution is changed, our courts reorganized, and their decisions nullified by a complete revolution of all our principles of government, yea, until our whole people are thoroughly degenerated, this Christianity is in force; and every claim, pretence and demand, that goes to the abrogation of an iota of it, or would strip it of its paramount authority, in our legislation, is a treasonable assault upon the great foundations upon which all our municipal statutes, as well as the true rights, liberties and happiness of the people repose.

And, if it is objected that this fact is a hardship upon those who, on pretence of the rights of conscience, would pervert our institutions, patronize indifferentism, irreligion, and infidelity, and to abrogate Divine laws, we can see, at once, its absurdity and unrighteousness, by considering what would be the result, if the same demand and the same pretence were urged by a community of Mahommedans who might settle among us,—for the country is open to all,—and who should urge, e. g., that the reading of the Bible in the public schools is an infringement of the rights of conscience, because it disagrees with the Koran? or, if they should insist that the practice of polygamy ought not to be punished, because their prophet had sanctioned it? Would our municipal laws yield before such a pressure from without, or from within? Would we so misinterpret and distort our principles respecting freedom of conscience? Would the state deem itself bound to *sacrifice* to every shade of opinion, and concede every thing to every body?—to abdicate its high prerogatives as in some sort a Teacher, and to become a mere reflection of all the conflicting prejudices and

vagaries of its subjects—as some would have the pulpit and the press to be—mere echoes to every wind of doctrine? and, losing its office as a guiding intelligence, to subside into a sort of enthroned—

“*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum,*”—and *NUMEN ademptum*, too?

But, we have not so learned liberty; the legislator thinks it not unmeet to restrain that latitudinarian conscience which falsehood and infidelity have formed, by sanctioning the law of Christ that marriage is to be between one man and one woman only, and by sending the man who violates it, to the state prison.

Beside the appropriate sense of dependence on God, I may, not unsuitably, advert to the office and authority of human government, and the obligation of law, as prescribed means for the attainment and security of human happiness, in contrast with some ideas which seem to conflict with just views of these high interests and agencies.

The object of government is the benefit of the whole community; and government itself is a Divine institution, without which no community can exist. Nor is there safety in any idea, that the authority of government and the obligation of law depend on the mere will of accidental majorities, or the provisions of some imaginary social compact. It seems to me, that there could be no stability, no security in such a state. The waves of the sea are not more capricious and dangerous, than would be the ebullition of the popular will, or the determination of a majority accidentally collected and clothed with the power, which, in its exercise at the caprice of the moment, would proceed on the principle that might makes right,—a principle as odious when it is proclaimed to enforce the dictation of the populace, as it is seen to be and hated in the decrees of a despot. But, if government be of God, and they that bear the power, no matter under what names, or with what forms inducted, are His ministers attending continually to this very thing,—they must be just, ruling in the fear of God. Their function must be invested with sacredness in the public

view, not only as it is animated with authority from Him, but as that authority becomes conspicuous in the justice of the laws which it enacts, and thus contributes to impress the public conscience with a sense of its majesty,—an idea which is at the basis of all peaceful obedience. It is not intended to assert that no changes are ever to be made in particular municipal statutes, or even in the fundamental and organic forms of law. Its great principles are eternal,—while human legislation may have misinterpreted and misapplied them. Our nation stands upon the assertion that, when any government becomes destructive of the great ends of its institution, it is the right and duty of the people to abolish it, and introduce the appropriate substitute. But what is intended is, that, in the whole process of establishing, modelling and modifying, the efficacy and the value of all that is done, not only depend upon its being solemnly, deliberately, and constitutionally accomplished, but grow essentially out of the principle, that, back of all human authority, in the premises, is to be discerned and invoked the awful form, the directing intelligence, the controlling majesty and supreme authority of Divine law. Under this principle, law will take its salutary shapes, and enforce its obligations, not because they are expedient, but because they are right. Its precepts will bind the conscience, because they are just ; its penalties will be enforced, because they are deserved. And the rule and standard by which these are formed, may be known to be equitable, from the fact that it has been set up by the Judge of all the earth. In the evolution of this process, it is supposed that the legislator shall look for his precedents to the immutable and universal principles of the Divine law. His business is to develop and carry out these principles. In their application, and sometimes in the very copy of the precept, as it is recorded in the book of God, he is to provide for the maintenance of impartial justice, between man and man ; for the defence and protection of the innocent and helpless ; for the aid of the suffering and destitute ; and for the punishment of the criminal. And in ascertaining what is just, and right, and what is merciful or criminal, and what award the

law should give,—he consults not the ever-varying and selfish notions of men, but—I repeat it—the grand, safe and controlling principles of the revealed will of God. And, although we may lament, that because of the imperfection of men, there is a falling short of the perfect realization of this beautiful and sublime theory, in all, even our best legislation, yet we have but to compare the laws which have grown up under the light of our Bible Christianity, with those of other people, to see at once, the immeasurable superiority of all our municipal regulations for the enforcement of judgment and mercy.

Connected with the character of the laws, is the method of their administration. This, of course, under the theory of which I have spoken, would be prompt, fair, and effective. The executive power would understand his strength, and feel his obligations, and would find an aid to his administration, both in the sanctions of his personal character, and in the cheerful support and happy obedience of the people, recognizing the authority from which law emanated, and rallying by the side of him in whom they saw God's minister, a terror *only*, but always, to the evil doer, and a praise of them that do well. Under such a sway, the people would lead a quiet and peaceable life, in godliness and honesty. Tone would be given to the public morals; and the constant action and reaction of a government and people, so closely related and identified,—and of the mutual influences so necessary especially in a republic like ours,—would tend to the purity of law and to the equity and happiness of those upon whom it is enjoined. Hence the importance of imbuing our whole people with the idea of the supremacy over us of God's laws, and with a pervading reverence for them because they are His. And when a government and people love these principles and co-operate to give them influence, they are established on firm foundations—upon a basis impregnable, immoveable, and imperishable.

But it is nevertheless to be observed, that by the very side of the marks and monuments, the limits and safeguards which are set up in the bosom of our institutions—conservative both of the freedom of conscience and the rights of God,—there seems to be growing up a disposition, partially fostered,—not as we

have seen, by the legitimate design and operation, but by the *perversion* of true religious liberty,—and cherished by the restless radicalism of the age, to assert and establish independence even of the throne of God.

This feeling is at the basis of all those arguments by which infractions of specific divine laws are sustained or advocated. If, for example, it is desired to abrogate or render inoperative, the laws respecting the sacredness of the Sabbath,—or if, in order to accommodate the gentle squeamishness of those sentimental gentlemen who think it cruel to hang men for murder, it is proposed to abrogate all capital punishment,—it is thought sufficient to disparage the Sabbath as a Jewish institution, and to assert that capital punishment is a mere relic of a barbarous age;—forgetful that both these institutions, like others that are depreciated by the counterfeit genius of modern civilization, were incorporated into a code, made not for Jews but for man,—by the authority of God,—and at an era and among a people, whose elevated civilization is illustrated in the earliest authentic history, and the most intelligible ethnological monuments of any of the nations of the earth; and whose advancement, not only long preceded the boasted eras of classical renown, but may vie with these, in arts and learning, in poetry, in refinement, in political sagacity, in domestic manners, and in social laws.

We are told that too great a strictness in holding to the authority of the Bible, in matters of national and municipal legislation, is inconsistent with the genius of our popular institutions, and that it is time to discard statutes and notions which are upheld only by a few old-fashioned, narrow-minded people, who have an awkward habit of reading the Bible in its plain meaning, and of insisting that its precepts are to be obeyed by Christian nations and republican states, as well as by individuals. Not a few have found a charm to conjure with, in the newly invented phrases, “our mission,” “our destiny,” and the high prerogatives of “the Anglo-Saxon race,”—terms of talismanic potency to change the moral character even of rapacity and fraud; and all the delicate questions and dubious moralities that interpose between the tremendous alternatives of peace and

war, are adjusted by the logic of an appeal to "national honor," and "necessity, the tyrant's plea;" and even the troublesome responsibilities that embarrass our meditations of foreign conquest, or, like intrusive spectres, disturb our visions of "revelry in the halls of the Montezumas," are all relieved as with the power of enchantment, by the simple utterance of such dainty figures of speech, as "conquering a peace," and "extending the area of freedom."

There are again, profound *illuminati*, both of foreign and domestic growth, who meet in "World's Conventions," and gravely resolve that the whole organization of society is fundamentally wrong, and needs to be re-cast and moulded anew by these plastic schemers, on the philanthropic principle of giving every thing to every body; converting land and marriage, and domestic happiness—that only bliss of Paradise which has survived the fall—and I know not but talent and skill, and such like odious monopolies, into the common capital of a vast joint-stock company, and bringing in the Millennium, by devices as notable and ingenious as the famous project of the philosophers of Laputa, to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. In this program of reform, the "Spirit of the Age" and the "light of the 19th century," are set up and invoked as the presiding deities, in moulding the institutions and principles of public and private life; and these are to be the guides and standards in the enactment and administration of laws, if indeed any laws are to be tolerated;—and especially all such statutes as are made for the *punishment* of the lawless and disobedient, of murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, and any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine—seeing that they are very inconvenient and oppressive to the votaries of the largest liberty,—must give way, because it is un-republican to impose even divine precepts upon a free people. And of little more respectability is the popular clamor, that the voice of the people is the voice of God; so that whatever a multitude, or a majority may decree at any time, is to be taken as the will of Heaven, more clearly and authoritatively expressed than in the plain and solemn revelation of His word. And amid the various phases of mere

party politics, wherein great principles are degraded into the mere foot-balls of contending factions, all distinctions of right and wrong are confounded, and the very moral sense of men becomes deadened, while the proprieties of social life are outraged, not only does it happen that those, who ought to be leaders and teachers of all that is great and patriotic, become mere demagogues and deceivers, inculcating the most corrupting sophistries, but that, in turn, they become themselves the veriest slaves, lost to all integrity, firmness, and independence. The people cannot always be kept in the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water; they will sometimes think and resolve for themselves; and then, when it is found that their prejudices will not yield, it would be amusing, if it were not so pitiful, to see with what facility, those who court the popular favor can succumb to the necessities of their dependence, and how subservient they become to the wisdom which is enshrined in the bosoms of sovereign electors, and which can utter its oracles so potently through the lips of the ballot-box. I am far from asserting that the people are never right; I am only speaking of them as the holders of power. To these are accommodated the elastic principles which, like lucifer matches, are warranted to keep in all climates, or like modern almanacs, which are calculated for every meridian. The changing colors of theameleon are not more rapid and fitful than the hues, however opposite, which differing latitudes elicit; and it is equally convenient to swear that that measure is white to-day, which, only yesterday, they asseverated was black. Does even a measure in itself right, and known to be so, elicit the opposition of a considerable portion of the community, either from ignorance or misrepresentation—or, on the other hand, is some measure, which is wrong and hurtful, for the moment, a favorite with the electors, then, how quick to acquiesce, or seem to acquiesce; and if the ends of personal or party ambition demand, even the clear, well established principles of law and constitution are overleaped, thrown down, or undermined; when the duty of a true statesman, instead of pandering to selfishness, and trimming to suit the popular breeze, blow shiftingly as it

will, is to throw himself upon his principles, to use his advantages of clearer insight, for *enlightening* and guiding the popular mind to that which is *right*; and that, whether *he* sink or swim; yea, if needs be, to stand alone, and fail, and suffer and die, with a brave and true heart, rather than involve the liberty and prosperity of his country, by playing the fawning sycophant, and flattering the people to their destruction:—

Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solida.

Herein are some of the controversies and contests in which our prosperity and adversity are involved—some of the phases in which the spirit of progress appears, or, speaking more accurately, the spirit of “change, perplexing nations.” We have the clearest right, and it is our duty too, claiming to be whole and sound-hearted freemen and patriots, as the descendants of the men who won our inheritance at the point of the sword, and died, bathed in their own blood, that they might bequeath to us this goodly land, and who established these governments for the good of the peaceful, the virtuous, the oppressed, the industrious, and, of the pious too, to ponder well the question, What shall the end of these things be? And how may we so act our part, that we may help, and not hinder, the true design of these great institutions,—that we may serve our generation by the will of God.

Ours is a popular government. You and I too, are a part of the people. We have an interest in the institutions and in the laws, which gives it to us as a prerogative, to see that they are not perverted; and in those that rule over us, to see that they be patriots, honest, capable, disdaining bribes and fearing God. And we have an interest in our freedom and religion, our personal rights, and our children’s inheritance, to see that none of these become the sport of change and confusion, nor subject to the mere mercy of the passing whim, whether of infidel philosophers and “Theophilanthropists,” of visionary sentimentalists and sympathizers with crime, of ambitious demagogues and

arrogant propagandists with great swelling words of vanity, promising liberty and spreading their own corruption—or, of any of the multitudinous host of quack reformers, that stand ready, each to administer some newly invented panacea for social diseases, as if, according to the spirit of that biting jibe,—

Our *constitutions* "were intended
For nothing else but to be mended."

I have spoken somewhat freely. But I have not spoken as if I believed our foundations were crumbling; for I have hope in God, and under Him, in such as you, for the generations to come.

You, gentlemen, are in training to enter into public life in the midst of these agitations. You are, at once, to *feel* their influence, and to *exert* an influence in shaping and directing them. Even the class to which you belong, and the educational systems and institutions, under which you are trained, have not been left to the stagnation of undisturbed repose. While our own age and country have made important progress toward just ideas of the necessity, and of the duty of the State to establish a system of universal education, there seems to be on the part of some of its advocates, a disposition to view the higher institutions of learning with jealousy, and to object to their enjoyment of State patronage, as inconsistent with the powers of the government, and as monopolies, the benefits of which are confined to the rich and the few, and therefore ought to be supported entirely by the voluntary benefactions of private munificence. It is perfectly true that the most essential aid has been received for these institutions of our land, from private sources, with comparatively little assistance from the public purse; and that the great transatlantic universities, were also founded and largely endowed by the private gifts of royal and other patrons. And precisely here is a noble field for the exercise of a patriotic and enlightened munificence, by those persons among us, to whom Providence has given great wealth; whose large and adequate benefactions may become at once

effective in laying broad and deep the permanent foundations of the higher education.

What can such men do better with their superabundant stores than to employ them in such munificence as this? How far nobler to connect their names with the endowment of a professor's chair, a library, or a College Hall, than to be content with the paltry distinction of a splendid palace in Union Square or Chestnut street, and a dashing equipage at Saratoga, or to heap up an excessive fortune to be dissipated by spendthrift heirs! Wealth is a magnificent prerogative to those who know how to use it; to those who know no other use for it than to minister to selfishness and vanity, it is, what the wise man says of a fair woman without discretion, a "jewel of gold in a swine's snout." All honor to the men who in earlier days, in our own country, have laid such foundations of usefulness, in consecrating even slender means to the cause of learning. All honor to the men of our own times, worthy of the title of merchant princes, whose names are bound up with the history of the chairs, and libraries, and halls they have endowed. Would, too, that there were among us more of the spirit that can imitate, as well as admire, the beneficence of living names, the modesty of whose owners I may not shock by uttering them. Then would not so many of our colleges and seminaries still be left to languish. Then would your own institution be set indeed upon a hill, strong and stable as that which bears up its foundations, and diffuse far and wide, an hundred-fold such healthful influences as would be cheaply purchased with the abstraction of a few useless thousands from the overflowing coffers of even a very few men.

Nevertheless there seems to be a peculiar reason, in a country so characterised by popular institutions, where the State is eminently organized as a commonwealth, that the institutions of learning should neither be thrown upon the *chances* of occasional patronage, however princely it may be, nor left to struggle, in precarious dependence, upon the inadequate support of more general contributions; but should be fostered, to the fullest extent needful for their efficiency, by legislative and public boun-

ty. Why should they not become the public care? If it be admitted that popular education is the appropriate care of the State, why not also, a suitable provision for the higher learning? Is its cost an objection? What is its cost in comparison with the expense of war, the losses of misgovernment, and peculation, and prodigal waste of public treasure, which, however notorious, excite so little real emotion in the breasts of "economists and calculators?"—and what, in comparison with the preventive influences, economical and prudent outlays, and effective applications of means, in all those departments of the public service, which require the presence of science and skill, together with all the benefits diffused throughout a community, leavened with the guiding and instructive influences of its more intelligent members? What,—I revert to the example now solely for illustration,—what has been the expense to the nation, of the Military Academy, whose importance has been recognized by the government from its foundation,—in comparison with the character and skill of the officers it has educated, the discipline and efficiency of our armies, and the advantages that have resulted, not only for the exigences of war, but for the advancement of science and the arts, and their application to works of internal improvement, and other benefits which have been carried directly or indirectly, by the scholars it has sent forth, into all the peaceful walks of life. Is the objection pressed, that these institutions are established for a favored few, and therefore have no claim on the republic? Have the public no interest in pursuits, prosecuted with the assistance of all needful facilities, for the advancement of science and its application to the arts, and comforts, and improvements of social life? And where are these so likely to be secured as in institutions, and under circumstances, that stimulate investigation and discovery—with all the requisite devotion, leisure and capacities, which are supposed to characterise academical and University Education? While, in the effort for popularising and diffusing knowledge by means of common schools, we may distribute a small portion to all, there may be a process of dilution and attenuation, like that of beating gold, but there must also be

more solid utensils and circulating coin; and neither gold leaf, nor gold coin are to be obtained without the agency of some, whose business it is to work the mines, and smelt the ore, and prepare the precious metal for the necessities of common life. I do not say that knowledge and invention are exclusively the product of institutions expressly devoted to the purpose. There have been self-made men, like our own Franklin, self-educated scholars, inventors and discoverers, who have not enjoyed these facilities; men worthy of all praise for the perseverance with which they have pursued knowledge under difficulties: but, instead of forming a general rule, these are but the exceptions that prove an opposite system. What would many such have been, but for the stimulus and preparation derived from those who went before them, and on whose labors they only entered? even if they were as ingenious as Ferguson, whose original and independent discoveries were, previous to his inquiries, which he prosecuted in the fields by star-light, or with the simple apparatus he had invented and set up in the attic of his father's barn,—already better known by the learned and the world. What if, by the light of the embers upon a cottage-hearth, or of a burning pine-knot, the humble scholar devoured books, filching time from needful sleep,—who wrote these books, and recorded in them, the achievements of philosophy? Or what, if like Jean Paul Richter when his poverty and modesty combined to deprive him of the privileges of access to the teachers of the University, even after he had resorted to it, the ardent thirst of knowledge slaked itself and found consolation still in books; where were the fountains from whence these streams flowed to him, and who were they that unsealed and opened them, and set them flowing? It does not invariably need, that, in order to gain the benefits of an University education the student should be matriculated among its sons. There are private channels, through which the healing waters may be drawn off, but there must be a fountain head and a reservoir somewhere. What, too, might not such students have become, if, instead of being oppressed with difficulties, they had pursued knowledge with the assistance of all appropriate means and appliances? Who have more

lamented their own deficiencies, or shown more generous zeal in behalf of institutions for supplying to other learners the facilities, the books, the apparatus, the teachers, the leisure, they themselves had lacked? And what can more advance science, and contribute to universal education, than the establishment of institutions, which not only concentrate and combine the various knowledges of the past, however or by whom acquired, but add to these stores by new discovery and by urging it forward, while these increasing and inexhaustible riches are distributed abroad throughout the land by every scholar whom they educate; like reservoirs which not only collect the waters flowing through ancient channels, but continually enlarge their resources by opening new fountains and building new aqueducts, and both refresh those who come to draw thence for their own thirst, and disperse their healthful streams abroad by means of every one who has filled his urn from their unsealed fulness—the overflowings of their limpid treasures. Let it not be thought that these institutions are but the cloistered abodes of monkish exclusives and learned drones, ignorant of practical life, and without sympathy with its duties and its wants,—mere dreamy visionaries,—purblind and spectacle-bedstrid,—fit subjects for the jealousy of the sons of toil, or for the sneers of witlings, political and civil, or rather uncivil,—as walking Cyclopædias of useless lore, and foolish builders of “light-houses in the sky.” The great Universities of the world have drawn around them the men of philosophic toil and patient investigation, alike receiving their contributions, and developing their power, while training them to enlighten, to bless and to delight mankind. In them and in kindred institutions, were fostered the geniuses which belong to no class, no country, and no age; the Bacons who taught men to think, and delivered them from the bondage of blind authority, and from the erratic and inconclusive reasonings of theory and speculation; the Lockes, who revealed the “secret wonders of the working mind;” the Newtons, who weighed the stars in balances, and gave the world a practically beneficial astrology, instead of the horoscopes and nativities of star-gazers and prognosticators; the Miltons, whose

sublime muse "awoke to ecstasy, the living lyre," and charmed and purified the heart with poesy and song. These, and such as these, the great lights of the world, shone not for themselves; their labors ended not upon themselves; being dead, they still live, in the memories of grateful hearts, in the benefits they have conferred upon their race. They opened fields of knowledge, wherein the common mind may freely expatiate. Through them, Astronomy illumines the midnight pathway of the mariner upon the deep; the discipline and analysis of the pure mathematics furnish formulas for the mechanic, abridging his labor and giving to his materials their greatest efficiency; Chemistry unlocks its treasures for the artisan and the agriculturist; History instructs with its intelligible "examples;" and Law learns the true principles of equity and vindicates its supremacy, in the justice and simplicity of its precepts. The ship-yard and the work-shop, the counting-house and the exchange, the field, the forest and the mine, the palace and the cottage, the halls of legislation, and the secluded dwelling, and the very clink of the hammer, the plowman's whistle, and the cheerful milk-maid's song, and all that comes home to men's business and bosoms, are instinct with the influences which emanate from these sources, and blessed with the comforts and the refinements with which their streams are freighted? And can we, can our country afford to lose from our galaxy, these stars, which if they rose in other hemispheres, shone upon our fathers, and still shine on us?—or can we afford to part with the names and labors of those who under the same systems, grew up upon our own soil—men with whom Wisdom and Prudence dwelt, and the knowledge of witty inventions? And shall we discard the nurseries of such minds as useless, if not pernicious neglect, and hate, and vilify them, as the nurseries of indolence, the repositories of learned lumber, and their pupils as the minions of an unequal favoritism? Allow me to use a homely, but forcible illustration: "Of what use," said a worthy farmer, to a pale young student, who was sojourning with him, "of what use is it for you to sit day after day, poring over books? My son goes out into the field, and improves

his health, while he labors for his own support, and produces food for others." "What plow does your son use?" was the only answer. The farmer described the implement, and added in commendation of it, that it was of three-fold value, compared with the old-fashioned utensils with which he had formerly wrought. His youthful guest in the meanwhile, had turned over the leaves of a book of drawings, and at length, with a quiet smile, pointing to one of them, inquired if the favorite plow were any thing like that? "The very model," was the astonished reply. "I think it possible then," said the youth modestly, "that I may have been of some use to my fellow-men, for I am the inventor of that plow."

Permanently endowed institutions of learning may be considered in another aspect. I revert to the objection that their benefits are provided only for the rich,—and that such only, or such as may be patronised by them, can have access to these privileges. Hence too it is said, that their support should be derived only from the voluntary contributions of men of wealth, and from those whom they educate. I am free to say that this objection springs from the narrowest possible view, and the policy it suggests is not only short-sighted, but would convert these fountains for the general welfare into the most odious monopolies indeed. What would it be but to confine the higher education to the most favored class, and to exclude with the force of an iron necessity, every youth, no matter how promising, whose means are small, and leave him to struggle in hopeless poverty, or to abandon all hope of attaining the goal of a generous ambition?

Genius and talent are not the exclusive prerogatives of rank and wealth; nature will, sometimes, on soils that can produce nothing else, breed such men, as never grew in hothouses, nor in her tropical climes. In the humblest employments, and in the abodes of the poor, are minds whose powers cannot all be concealed. They belong to their country and their race; and it is surely true policy to evoke them from their obscurity, and to assist their enterprise, and fit them for the appropriate exercise of their high endowments. If it be impracticable to do this in every case, it is

nevertheless no part of true wisdom so to hedge up their way, that few or none shall emerge into the light, and to abandon them to darkness and neglect. Neither is it necessary to make such ample provision that all who aspire to a liberal education shall be transferred from poverty to halls and foundations, which shall pamper indolence and corrupt their self-reliance. Yet for all this, may there not be made such public provision, as, ensuring to teachers their support, and to colleges their needful literary and philosophical apparatus, shall at once reduce the personal expense of education, and secure the highest ability for instruction? Thus, encouraging the youth of humble means, affording him free access to the fountains of knowledge; while his personal support may be derived, at least in part, either from labor in the intervals of study, or from the aid of friends, and may be economically regulated in the preservation or formation of frugal habits, and the appropriate husbandry of his private resources. Open the doors of our universities for the admission of such; remove the restrictions, the spirit of which was once ingeniously read by an indignant Sizar in the motto of a transatlantic University, "*Nisi Dominus frustra*," which he aptly rendered, "Unless you are lords, you need not come hither;" invite the approach of the learner, in whom a slender purse cannot repress the thirst of knowledge;—let the State do this,—remembering that she has need of her sons, in the walks of learning, as well as in the camp and the battle-field; and she is training them up for her service and honor, and is conferring a boon upon the Commonwealth. Does she jealously proscribe an aristocracy of birth and wealth, —then let her find its antidote in developing the nobler influences of the minds which dwell among the poorest of her children. Educate one such in a town or neighborhood, and who can calculate the result upon the intellectual, moral and physical condition of the whole community.

It was under this liberal and enlightened system, that the son of a small farmer, named Adams, in the desolate moorlands of Cornwall, whose native bent predicted that he had no vocation for raising fat oxen and prize pigs, was fitted for the Uni-

versity, became a member of St. John's College, Cambridge, finished his undergraduate course, as Senior Wrangler, is now a mathematical tutor in the same College, but better known as not unjustly disputing with La Verrier, the honor of discovering the planet Neptune. It was this system, which took a studious country lad from a village grocery, made him the great light of his time, and appeals for its just appreciation, to the impression he left upon his age, and to the eulogies and tears which the Patriotism and Learning, the Liberty and Religion, both of Scotland and of the world, are shedding upon the recent grave of Thomas Chalmers. It is just such a system, that our Colleges are endeavoring to build up; which, in the face of privation, opposition, and contemptuous neglect, they *have*, with generous ardor and undiminished fortitude, in some degree, built up; and their claim upon popular sympathy, and the public countenance and aid, is founded upon the indubitable fact, that the vast majority of the men they have educated, are from the humbler walks of life, and that they do throw open their gates so widely that no young man of suitable capacity and energy has ever been excluded, or needs to turn away. And not one of these liveth unto himself. As well might the attempt be made to confine the rays of the glorious sun, so that, instead of shining for all, he might delight himself in his own splendor, as to restrain the influence, and circumscribe within their own persons, the knowledge which the educated acquire. If inclination do not lead, necessity will demand, of them, to disperse abroad. In the various learned professions—as legislators and judges—as teachers of youth, of a different type from the Ichabod Cranes, of a former day—as private gentlemen—yea, as farmers, merchants and artisans, they are scattered throughout the community, and diffuse to all around them, if not the precise stores with which they were imbued, the practical benefits and wholesome example of the skill and power which educated men bring to the service of their generation. And it is utterly vain to excite jealousy against such a class, and to attempt to ostracise the influence they are fitted to exert. Mind will govern. It may indeed be undisciplined, unsancti-

fied ; and its mighty powers, perverted, may be exercised only to misguide and to destroy. But this only suggests the more forceful argument, for such adequate provision by the community, as may ensure and induce upon these governing minds the salutary results of sound education—the discipline that liberalises, refines and sanctifies ; and that hackneyed maxim has not yet lost its truthfulness :—

“ *Ingenuus didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.*”

The influence of the master minds in every community will go forth in their opinions, their examples, their instructions, and their very position,—and will be manifested in shaping and modifying the habits of the people, the laws, the institutions, social customs, the questions of peace and war, slavery, temperance, politics, and religion. The universality of this fact is suggested by Mr. Prescott, in his recent work on Peru : speaking of the Inca nobility, he observes that “they possessed an intellectual pre-eminence, which, no less than their station, gave them authority with the people. Indeed it may be said to have been the principal foundation of their authority.” The race manifested “a decided superiority over the other races of the land, in intellectual power ; and it cannot be denied that it was the fountain of that peculiar civilization and social polity, which raised the Peruvian monarchy above every other state in South America.” And the bearing of this fact upon ourselves—with the evidence that there is no need to be possessed of aristocratic rank and wealth, in order to the exertion of that influence which liberally educated minds will have—is disclosed in the testimony of a historiographer of no mean reputation, whom the soil of Pennsylvania nourishes among the sons that do her honor. Mr. William B. Reed, in his late work, remarks upon this point, as to the character and position of the leaders of the American revolution, that, “as a general rule, they were men of high classical education.”

By educated men, you will not so misunderstand me, as referring to a class whose attainments are limited to a diploma, nor yet to those pedants who have been crammed with a certain

amount of Greek, Latin, and Mathematics. I refer to men, who, under whatever system their faculties were developed, are the possessors of undoubted intellect; whose mental powers have been evoked in the process of instruction; whom discipline has drilled and trained, and taught to think, and to investigate for themselves, while it has but rendered them more docile, even while it gave them manly independence and made them reverent of the truth; whose social and moral nature, and the physical too, has been cultivated in appropriate harmony with the mental, in such way, that they are both wise, and good, and useful men; who, with the attainment of useful knowledge, have learned also how to increase it and apply it—adding to the general stock—reducing it to the practical wants of life, and contributing their share to the progress of the age, in arts and inventions, in truth and virtue. And this they may do, whether as professed students or teachers, as residents in universities and schools, or occupying the prominent stations of public life, or as preachers of the Gospel, as statesmen, as lawyers and physicians, as manufacturers, or artisans, or farmers, or as private citizens. And in all these stations the benefit of their influence shall be reaped by all who need their services, and by all with whom they dwell, in the exact measure in which wisdom and knowledge are better than ignorance and imbecility, presumption, and imposture.

And in coming to the conclusion of this branch of my subject, it is in place, just here, to illustrate the whole current of remark upon it, with a reference, which the spirit of the occasion suggests, to three names—examples of that combination of influences, direct and indirect, which produce and educate great men.

Gilbert de Motier, Marquis de La Fayette, sprung from the high aristocracy of France, and nursed in the bosom of wealth, evinced, even in his childhood, that generous enthusiasm, which was developed and nourished by the liberal studies and classical examples, with which he became conversant, in the schools of Auvergne, and in the University of Paris—so that, at the age of sixteen, he writes: “I look with contempt upon

the greatness and littleness of the court, with pity on the emptiness and insufficiency of society, with disgust on the petty pedantries of the army, with indignation on all kinds of oppression." And thus was the spirit formed, which allured him, when but nineteen years of age, from the arms of his yet more youthful bride, to become the companion of them, who, on this new continent, were erecting the standard of Liberty. The American Declaration of Independence bursting upon his ear, taught him where to flesh his maiden sword, and made this contest his own. "At the first knowledge of this quarrel," he said, "my heart was enlisted, and I only thought of going to rejoin my standard." Benjamin Franklin did not enjoy the direct advantages of a collegiate education: yet, had it not been for its practical equivalent, had it not been for its indirect influence in the books he read, the patrons he found, and the men of letters with whom he associated, he might not have left to his young countrymen the inheritance of that brilliant example, of a soap-boiler's son and a printer's boy, becoming one of the first statesmen and philosophers of his age, until, "*Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.*" It was not, indeed, any pecuniary pressure that restrained from University life, that young Virginian, whose first aspirations would have led him to a midshipman's berth, and who next appears in the character of a country surveyor; yet, who that peruses his history, and reads his state-papers, and his correspondence, and considers the character of his counsellors, can fail to recognize the studies and the influences which formed his mind, inspired his maxims, made him no less a sage and a man of letters than a military chieftain and sagacious ruler; and, in all, that leader of men's hearts and souls, whose memory the suffrages of the world have consigned to enduring fame, with title the most illustrious she ever emblazoned—"George Washington, the Father of his Country!"

In discussing systems of education, I shall not go beyond the bare introduction of the question, whether we have pursued methods the most effective, by adopting those which we have, at least in part, inherited from other times and other lands?

whether it is indeed preferable, even on the score of lessening the pecuniary expense of education, to collect the youth who resort to our colleges, in cloisters and refectories modelled after the monasteries of old, instead of distributing them among such families, as offer the comforts and refinements of home, and may still partially exert upon them those graceful, moral, social and conservative influences, with which they were surrounded under the paternal roof, amid the sweet domestic guardianship of a father's vigilance and a sister's love.

But, leaving this question : It is quite possible, that in your future life, not all of you, gentlemen, are to be rulers, legislators, historians, poets, inventors, editors or teachers ; but it is highly probable that in whatever sphere your lot may be cast, you will seek to exert your power ; and you will exert a certain influence in guiding public opinion, and will leave some impression on your age. Be it your care, then, to fit yourselves for this high function, as legitimate "Tribunes of the people," with noble aims, and adequate furniture, to promote truth and to confront error, to resist the arts of demagogues, and to refute the plausible sophistries, with which, that which calls itself progress, would impose upon your minds its futile chimæras ; when with no large and profound views of things, but drawing hasty conclusions from their surface, the opinionative, the flippant, the selfish and the shallow pretender, the pert "Sir Oracle," comes forth with his newly vamped, yet stale projects of change, misnamed reform.

Far be it from me, to oppose all progress, or to exhort you to a blind defence of time-honored abuses, emulous only of that dogged temper of the Bourbons, of whom it was said that they "never forgot anything, and never learned anything." There is a certain arrangement of Divine Providence, under which its own plan of melioration in our fallen world is accomplished by degrees. Creation itself was a gradual process. Revelation was not complete in its first announcements, though now full, and justly claiming to be the only safe lamp for our feet, and the only true light of our path. The conditions of man have been improved, by the enlarging discoveries of science and the

inventions of art; and the progress of our race may be estimated by the monuments of its gradual emergence from despotism and darkness, to civil and religious freedom, to the enjoyment of the more appropriate means of knowledge and happiness.

But now, I am warned that I have trespassed long upon your patience. Nor does it seem needful here to discuss at great length the principles that should guide us in the exertion of a right influence upon the age; and I shall do but little more than to set them down in the way of conclusions from these preceding remarks.

Let, then, no merely selfish ends predominate with you. The acquisition of personal ease, wealth, reputation, pleasure, or power, pursued as the chief ends of life, are inferior at best, and should ever be regarded as secondary to the noble ambition of promoting the public welfare,—aiming

“To scatter blessings round a smiling land,
And read your history in a nation's eyes.”

Even when public benefit is but the incidental result of personal endeavor, how does it detract from the motives which only conduce to this result by indirection. How it dims the glory of England's great admiral, that his splendid naval achievements should have been prompted by such a low ambition as Nelson is recorded to have avowed—“a peerage, or Westminster Abbey.” How does it belittle the “wizard of the North” to discover, in Abbotsford, the miniature imitation of baronial towers, and to read the confession that he used his pen, as an enchanter's wand for turning thought into gold, for the enrichment of a family, and for the enrolment of its name among those of a mere hereditary nobility. Nor even in aiming at the public good, should we be limited to that which is material, sensual and worldly. Valuable as is the improvement of the physical and social conditions of man; sublime and dignified as are the attainments of philosophy, of art, of mental freedom, of regulated civil and religious liberty; these are not ultimate ends; and there is such a thing as these degenerating into a gross materialism, and into a profligate licentiousness. This

earth itself is reserved for high destinies. Redeemed by its Maker, as the field wherein lies hidden a peculiar treasure for Himself, it is to be cultivated for Him, and its children trained for a divine destiny in His service and joy. Both our benefit, and that benefit of others which we may promote, is in that loftier inheritance which is incorruptible, undecayed, unfading,—in glory, honor and immortality. This world is the theatre of that high achievement, in which the universe is to read the manifold riches of the divine wisdom and goodness. To illustrate and subserve this result, and to obtain and diffuse the blessings which it involves, is the ultimate design of all right enterprise, and the essence of all real progress. There can be no higher or better end for man than to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Again; studiously consult the lights of history. It will tell you what has been tried, what has failed, and why it ought to have failed, what errors to avoid, and what promises real utility and success. Its pregnant examples teem with great maxims for the relations and duties of public life, and for the enlightened course of the patriotic citizen. It is a graphic, living philosophy. Study thoroughly also the political history of constitutions, and particularly those of your own country,—the nature and harmony of their provisions,—and the spirit and reasons of the laws. Many a tyro and sciolist in moral and political philosophy, has daringly rushed forward with profane hand to mutilate, under the pretence of mending, what matured wisdom and piety, and lofty patriotism, have revered with the awe becoming solemn and sacred things. It is not always dotard ignorance, the selfish pride of opinion, bigoted adherence to custom, blind obstinacy, and superstitious confidence in the infallibility of preceding generations, which cries out with firm resolve,—“*Nolumus leges mutari.*” A profound critic long ago, made a remark, which might have suggested the subsequent position of Pope, that “a little learning is a dangerous thing.” With a sagacity that might find a fitting theme in many other relations, he observed, “that men who could only read the Latin Vulgate, were offensively posi-

tive in their interpretation of prophesy ; those who got as far as the Greek Septuagint became more moderate and cautious ; but those who ascended to the mastery of the original Hebrew, became perfectly modest and almost timid." Not only in the hurried dogmas of an editorial leader, but in the graver atmosphere of legislative counsellings, have men forgotten, in their subjection to excited impulses, the lessons and the warnings, the lights and the restraints of old examples and considerate law, which though of ancient origin, belong to all time, and are ever fresh and vital ; not mere foils for the transcendent wisdom of this wonderful, and somewhat pert, nineteenth century. This very century, notwithstanding its boasted light and freedom, has produced examples of bigotry, illiberality, and indocile and oppressive prejudice, as vicious as any that may be culled from the records of the past ; even to the judgment of Galileo, or the burning of Servetus.

But above all, let your views, on all questions of morals and government, of political and personal deportment, be formed on the principles of the revealed word of God. There is a thinly veiled infidelity which utters its flippant oracles sometimes through the mouth-piece of a ribald press, sometimes from the rostrum invaded by charlatan philosophers, and itinerant lecturers on all the *ologies*,—and sometimes echoed from lips that *should* keep knowledge and teach wisdom,—the impertinence which talks of the Bible as a misinterpreted revelation, as an obsolete authority, and an antiquated thing ; to be laid aside and forgotten, outrivalled and exploded by the newer wisdom of this age. In the worship of mere science, and the acceptance of every pretension to it, because it seems to be "some new thing,"—and in the abuse of freedom of conscience, men have often fallen into the mischievous absurdity of "compassing themselves about with sparks of their own kindling," and rejoiced in the vain deceit, as if they had been regenerated with a baptism of divine light. The race is not extinct, which, while it strains at a gnat, can swallow a camel. Discarding the supernatural miracles of the Bible, they doat on lying wonders and more incredible marvels of their own inven-

tion. Rejecting the scriptural and rational testimony of eternal truth, which instructs our satisfied faith that the heavens and the earth and all beings that are therein, were made by an intelligent Creator, and that men are the offspring of God,—they prefer a cosmogony, which, by some fortuitous, or spontaneous perpetual motion of mechanical forces, educes now an universe, and now a planet from the impalpable, vapor of the dim *nebulae*, and developes intellectual and immortal man from apes and tadpoles, the spawn of frogs! Venerable truths are reduced to the category of mere *isms*, and a revealed theology is represented as the figment of system-makers and theorising divines,—equivalent with necromancy and astrology. Expediency becomes the basis of moral obligation, and law must be suited to the dimensions of that selfishness which strives to veil its hideous deformity under the sanction, and by invoking for its authority, the suffrage, of that most abused thing, “the genius of a free people.”

In the restless endeavor to get rid of the dictates of the Bible, men array themselves in various, and even opposite shapes. Sometimes it is open infidelity, sometimes it is rationalism; sometimes their schemes are baptized with the name of holy truths, and they have “gospels,” and “regenerations,” and “faith,” and “milleniums;” and they have high-sounding phrases, such as the “intense,” the “earnest,” and the “interior life,” and transcendental visions of “a good time coming;”—and “with the *mouth* they show much love.” But all are practically agreed in this, that the wisdom and the authority which are from above, are set aside; and, while they would but heal the hurt of the people slightly, they will not stand in the ways and see, nor ask for the old paths, where is the good way, that they may walk therein, and find rest for their souls. Truly, the word of the Lord is tried; men have branded it as an imposture; they have fought against it with the weapons of pseudo philosophy; they have banished it to dusty shelves, and persecuted and burnt it with fire: yet—*there it is!* It has come forth as gold from the furnace; and while the vain imaginations of men have been busy in fetching up from the depths the sys-

tems and plans with which they would detrude it from its sovereignty,—only to be hurled back into the Stygian pools where they were spawned,—Faith, Conscience, and Truth, maintain their steady foundations, and neither atheist nor devil has yet prevailed for their overthrow.

There are still left a few old-fashioned people ; who rejoice in the wisdom that cometh from above, and who can reason, too, out of the Scriptures of God, with no despicable force. Nay, here is one remarkable fact ;—such are the inconsistencies of men, or such the homage which Revelation compels from those who hate it, that it is no uncommon thing, even, for those who resort to it but to pervert, to make their appeal thither, for the sanction of schemes that are directly condemned by its whole genius and spirit, and by its clearest precepts ; and, in the clamorous charity that folly lauds, or knavery, for its own sinister purposes, pretends, we are required to do homage to every vagary that may be propounded by inflated conceit, under the pains and penalties of bigotry, “ *without benefit of clergy ;*” and to revere as the accredited expounders of Divine faith and truth, whatsoever arrays itself in black coat and white cravat, and writes Reverend before its paltry name, as if herein were the conclusive sanctions and credentials of any and all the absurdities put forth by bastard philosophy, heretical imposture, quackery, and empiricism, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie. Now, while there is abundance of other and more honorable evidence, nevertheless, this very indiscriminating credence,—the delusion, sometimes, even of the children of the light, and the pretext of children of another sort,—and all this effort to bias the word of God, are in themselves, at least, an involuntary deference to the fact that Christianity and its institutions have a strong hold upon the public mind. Happy, too, are we, in this, that the Bible *is* thus free to the appeal of all ; and all we ask for it, is, that it may be fairly examined, both as to its origin and its teachings, and that by this sure test, all opinions may be tried. Happy for us—happy for our country—happy for the world, if, with a candid, docile, and obedient spirit, men resort to this law and testimony. It fears no in-

vestigation. It is too late in the day for the puny assaults of nibbling critics, and we demand for it supreme authority. It is a book of principles, suggestive of all that is venerable in government and law, of all that is dignified and valuable in the institutions of society, of all that is salutary and graceful in the deportment of life, of all that is peaceful and sure, and sanctifying in the hope of immortality. It may not bend, nor give way before human devices for the melioration of the world. That is not melioration which it does not sanction. It is a book for man, for all climes and for all generations; like the salvation it proclaims, and the God whom it reveals, it is the gift and the law of Heaven, not for the Jew only, but also for the Gentile. It was constructed, not for the infancy of the world, but for its maturest and brightest age, to bring about that age, and to adorn and control it, when that great characteristic of time, which angels heralded, shall be universally realised in "glory to God in the Highest, on earth, peace and good will to men," when Jehovah shall reign, and the multitudes of the nations shall be glad thereof. It is itself, the infallible expositor of what is local, temporary, and obsolete, and of that also which is universal, permanent, and good for man. That very book itself suggests, and as its influence is felt, controls and produces change in the condition of society. Mistake, perversion, there may be, there have been. Hierarchical and kingly despotisms, have, in other days, supported oppression with arguments professing to emanate from divine authority. But the word of God was imprisoned then. These are the days of its freedom, and its healthful influences are unchained as the mountain stream and the mountain air. As men drink of them and breathe them, as they better understand and better obey its holy truths, change has indeed come, civilization has advanced, government is defined, law is vindicated, human rights are established, our own land is *born*, and moves to its proud eminence among the nations, salvation flows to the ends of the earth, and the trumpet-sound of jubilee proclaims liberty throughout the lands, to all the inhabitants of the world.

This, gentlemen, is that sure word of Truth, to which ye do well to take heed as unto a light shining in a dark place.

But, farther, gentlemen, forget not the importance of being personally under its influence. Received into your hearts, it shall form in you a spirit and character of uprightness, essential to all usefulness and worthy success. It will direct your aims, and preserve you from selfish motives and unmanly fears. It will sustain your firm soul from sinking under trial and discouragement. It will furnish you with consolations which philosophy cannot command, nor stoicism emulate. It will purify your hearts and your ways; and it will introduce you to the commonwealth of the saints, and inaugurate you into the illustrious citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven.

“ Learning has borne such fruit in other days,
On all her branches; piety has found
Friends in the friends of science; and true prayer
Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.”

Then, be it yours to maintain allegiance to God; to be enlightened and ardent lovers of your country and of man; to consecrate your powers to these sublime interests. Illustrate and commend the principles of rational liberty and genuine religion, and exemplify their excellence by the love and practice of whatsoever things are honest and pure, lovely and of good report. Be of those who draw upon the land the smile of heaven.

And thus may you and your country be exalted in righteousness; and, like the Roman Cornelia, pointing to her children with a patriot mother's pride, and exclaiming, “these are my jewels,” so may this noble commonwealth, through your means maintaining her honorable rank as the “Key-stone of the Union,” point to you, her sons, as the bright illustrations of her heraldic motto,—the worthy examples and living impersonations of her manly, Christian,

“VIRTUE, LIBERTY, AND INDEPENDENCE.”